ON THE HISTORY OF LIBRARIES AND SCHOLARSHIP

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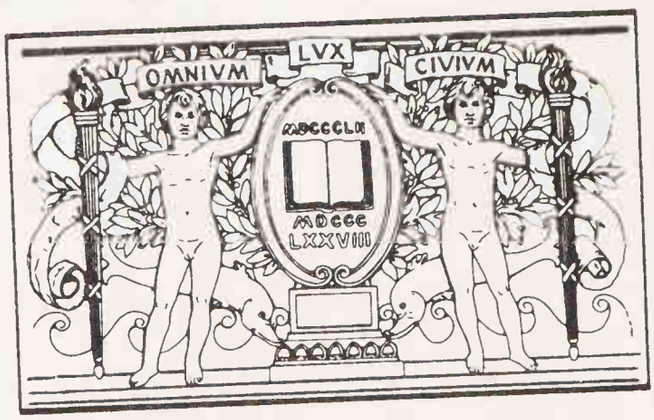

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ON THE HISTORY OF LIBRARIES AND SCHOLARSHIP

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THE LIBRARY HISTORY ROUND TABLE
OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
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PREFACE

THE CENTER FOR THE BOOK in the Library of Congress is pleased to publish, as part of its Viewpoint Series, a revised version of a paper originally presented by I. R. Willison of the British Library on June 26, 1979, at the annual meeting of the American Library Association. His talk was part of a program on libraries and scholarship sponsored by the Center for the Book and the Library History Round Table of the American Library Association.

The purpose of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress is to stimulate appreciation of the essential role of the book and the printed word in our society. Ian Willison's fine paper is one of several presentations in the center's program of encouraging the interdisciplinary and scholarly study of books. Other speakers have included Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, who delivered a lecture entitled "In the Wake of the Printing Press," and Robert Darnton, who spoke on "The *Encyclopédie* and the Working Class." Elizabeth Eisenstein also served as the center's first resident consultant.

The Center for the Book is a privately funded organization that is nourished by a remarkable public institution. It was established by an Act of Congress, Public Law 95-129, approved October 13, 1977. Drawing on the resources of the Library of Congress, it works closely with many organizations to explore important issues in the book and educational communities, to encourage reading, and to encourage research. Its goal is to serve as a useful catalyst among authors, publishers, librarians, booksellers, educators, scholars, and *readers.* The citizens on its national advisory board serve as channels between the center and their particular segments of the book community. They suggest projects, participate in programs, and provide advice about how we can dramatize the importance of the book and the printed word. Contributions to the Center for the Book, which are tax deductible, are welcome.

Proposals for lectures, seminars, programs, and research projects should be sent to the executive director. The interests of the Center for the Book include the educational and cultural role of

the book; the history of books and printing; the future of the book, especially as it relates to new technologies and other media; the international flow of books; authorship and writing; the publishing, design, production, and preservation of books; the distribution, access, and use of books and printed materials; reading; literacy; and the institutions of the book world.

Seminar proceedings and lectures are published and disseminated as widely as possible. The following Center for the Book-sponsored publications may be ordered prepaid from the Information Office, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540: *Television, the Book, and the Classroom,* $4.95; *Reading in America 1978,* $4.95; and *The Circle of Knowledge: An Exhibition in the Great Hall of the Library of Congress,* $2.50.

John Y. Cole
Executive Director
The Center for the Book

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I. R. WILLISON

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THERE ARE SIGNS THAT research into the history of libraries and research into the history of scholarship in the West, never since the eighteenth century particularly close to each other, are now being conceived as parts of a common enterprise. This coming together involves both an enlargement of the use of these two kinds of research and an increased sophistication in their method and theme, bringing them inescapably into the mainstream of general history. Some large perspectives are opening before us.[1]

I

As instances of the convergence between the history of libraries and the history of scholarship I would cite, from the library side, Phyllis Dain's exemplary work on the New York Public Library, with its often startling exploration of the "larger fields of politics" and "intellectual and social trends" contrasting strongly with the previous "tradition of chronicler," as she calls it, represented by Harry Miller Lydenberg. From the side of scholarship I would cite the employment of library history by Rudolf Pfeiffer and E. J. Kenney in their histories of classical scholarship (and now by Bernhard Fabian in his work on the origin of English studies in eighteenth-century Göttingen), in succession to the tradition of chronicler represented by Sir John Sandys. For a work pioneering this whole development, though perhaps somewhat obscured from English-speaking readers since it was published in 1940 in German, I would point to the third, historical volume of the Fritz Milkau-Georg Leyh *Handbuch der Bibliothekswissenschaft* and its doctrine that "the historical significance of libraries should be presented in a general cultural context together with the history of scholarship and education." [2]

For signs of the enlarged use of this new history of libraries and scholarship I would look first at its main intended audience: the general historians. Here for the past two decades, since the appearance in 1958 of Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin's work *L'Apparition du livre* and in particular of Martin's *Livre, pouvoirs et société à Paris au XVIIe siècle* in 1969, the running

has been made almost exclusively by the French Annalistes; though one must remember that their fundamental concern with the total mentalité of a period embraces popular at least as much as high culture. Whether or not the recent publication of Elizabeth Eisenstein's study *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* with its more precise focus on the world of learning represents a trend in Anglo-Saxon historical studies that will complement the French initiative it is at the moment too early to say.[3]

Then I would turn to the praxis of the actual management of libraries and of scholarship: what Bacon, in *The Advancement,* called "the administration of learning." Though Bacon insisted that a "just story" of learning was essential for its effective administration, it seems a fact that at the level of general political action such history has only been used when radical or revolutionary change was at issue. In the case of libraries one thinks of the prefatory note to the manifesto that projected the Library of Congress onto the national scene, Librarian Herbert Putnam's annual report of 1901. Because the logic of the manifesto required an inclusive "statement of present conditions," in Putnam's words, "it includes necessarily a reference to certain historical facts through which these conditions become intelligible." In research a comparable case is the first chapter, "Historical and General," of Flexner's famous report to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in 1910 on medical education in the United States and Canada, which helped inaugurate American predominance in world medicine. It is perhaps inevitable that at this level of grand administration the use of history should be infrequent: after all, once publicly established, sound doctrine ought to last unchanged.[4]

Be that as it may, at the level of more specialized, day-to-day management I think one can indeed see a growing interest in usable history. So far as the world of scholarship is concerned I rely mainly on impressions from informal conversation, though I would point to the active support of the Volkswagen Foundation and its officials for the research program of the Ducal Library at Wolfenbüttel, which is one of the main centers in Europe for our subject. As far as librarians are concerned I take, as a local example, the fact that we in Bloomsbury find the dissertations by Barbara McCrimmon on the publishing of the British Museum's

first general catalog and by Professor Dain's pupil Philip Weimerskirch on the British Museum's acquisition policy in the nineteenth century invaluable in framing our processing and collection-development policies. Generalizing from this I suggest that the founding last year within the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) of a working group on library history represents a move to remedy the virtual eclipse of the historical, so-called "Eurocentered" dimension in professional thinking that accompanied the defeat of Georg Leyh in 1953 by the then president of IFLA, Pierre Bourgeois, on the question of the future of the federation, and the consequent preoccupation of librarians during the next twenty-five years with the immediate, manipulatory task of what came to be known as current Universal Bibliographical Control. The very success of UBC produces a deepening of library collections and their use that can only be managed satisfactorily by increasing competence in the sort of history I am considering.[5]

II

It is with the sophistication in method and theme of the new history that I am more particularly concerned here, however.

To return to my opening remarks. When I say that the history of libraries and the history of scholarship have not been particularly close to each other in the past I am not, of course, denying that there is (and always has been) a traditional belief in—an inherited general experience of—their interdependence. Nor am I implying that the new sophistication in method and theme will in any way subvert that belief. Rather it will be concerned with exhibiting, in detail, the actual structure of the historical interdependence of libraries and scholarship. It will do this by adducing in far more systematic fashion than has hitherto been attempted the relevant archival and other primary evidence—the correspondence, diaries, and other papers of scholars and librarians, the notes of ownership and of use to be found in their books, the administrative documents, and so on—while at the same time identifying the fundamental, constant features in our inherited experience, a grasp of which will enable the historian to make

sense of this mass of primary evidence and (one hopes) eventually construct narrative from it.

The systematic use of archival evidence may be compared to the technical sophistication introduced into the writing of political and diplomatic history by the generation of Leopold von Ranke almost a century and a half ago. On the other hand, the fundamental, constant features—if they are really constant—only emerge when one reflects on the interdependence of libraries and scholarship schematically (or synchronically, as the structuralists would say) in the terms of its present and future as well as its past. It is this process of reflection that I shall now try to assist on its inevitably lengthy way.

III

The general view of the history of libraries and scholarship in the West can, I think, be summarized in terms of two great climacterics, the second being in many respects a reenactment of the first.

One begins of course with the Museum and Library of Alexandria, the first institution to embody the idea of systematically organized, collaborative, encyclopedic research, which has continued substantially the same since its founding. The idea had been invented (there seems to be no better word for it) by Aristotle in response to the liberating but also disruptive effect on intellectual life in fifth- and fourth-century Athens of the free-lance author and lay reading public. The emergence of the free-lance author and his public constituted what was in fact the first great revolution in the Western world of books, a marked departure from the mainly liturgical and archival role of the book during the previous millennia. Yet at the same time the very ebullience of the Sophists, poets, historians, and their readers had provoked Plato, the intellectual conscience of the revolution, to attempt to preserve serious discourse by reducing it to the timeless, abstract, and virtually bookless condition of the disciplines of mathematics. Indeed, his attack on the Sophists and the rest can be seen as the first in the great tradition of radical criticism of the free world of books considered as instruments for self-advancement—the search for and attainment of "fame, power, and the love of women" in Freud's analysis—on the part of the writers, as opposed to

instruments for the attainment of true, absolute knowledge (episteme). But to dismiss the poetic, historical, and other non-mathematical modes of discourse from the ambit of serious consideration meant depriving the mind of access, however imperfect, to most of what actually happens in the world. Sheer realistic concern with the continuity and vigor of intellectual life required the next generation, led by Aristotle, to reappropriate the totality of these modes for episteme, first by containing (through his Lyceum library) the profusion of their physical embodiment in books, and then by considering them sub specie aeternitatis according to a system of normative subject fields: for example, the "rational order of literary art" (as Pfeiffer terms Aristotle's *Poetics*). Bibliography becomes the prerequisite of scholarship, as scholarship becomes the prerequisite of philosophy.[6]

Precise facts concerning the post-Lyceum Alexandrian Library are predictably sparse. (Leyh's contributors, Wendel and Göber, now supplemented by P. M. Fraser's massive study *Ptolemaic Alexandria,* and the first volume of Pfeiffer's history provide the best digest.) Nevertheless it seems clear that the success of the library was due to the four techniques of control of the natural anarchy of the book world that have since become fundamental for research library administration: catholic acquisition (in the case of non-Greek texts largely by translation); rationalization of the format, and even the content, of books; systematic author and subject cataloging, linked with more finely edited bibliography (the *Pinakes* of Callimachus); and a continuing conservation program, largely in the form of recopying. It was thus that the Alexandrian Library and its new type of professional, systematic reader created both the concept and the reality of a constantly expanding but coherent, circumscribed, and therefore encyclopedic classical heritage, together with the historico-philological disciplines dependent on reading (anagnosis) that permit its philosophical comprehension: what August Boeckh in a celebrated phrase more than two millennia later termed "die Erkenntnis des Erkannten"—"the knowledge of the known." [7]

From the point of view of general history, however, it is as a major instrument of cultural propaganda, helping to assimilate the élites of the Greek and non-Greek peoples in the Ptolemaic empire, that the Alexandrian Library had its climacteric effect in

the ancient world. The progress of this secular effect can be followed in the similar role played by the research library in the ecumenical empires subsequent to the Ptolemaic. There were the first public libraries in Rome, associated with historical encyclopedism of Marcus Terentius Varro and helping to realize the imperial idea implicit in the revolutionary strategy of Julius and, in particular, Augustus Caesar. After the next, Islamic, revolution came the Bayt al-Hikmah (House of Wisdom) and the Aristotelianizing encyclopedists and translators of ninth-century imperial Baghdad: the first occasion (it would seem) on which the Western scientific enterprise showed away from home its acceptability to oriental traditions and its capacity for assimilating them, thereby enlarging itself. Finally, and terminally for our first climacteric, were the libraries and encyclopedists of tenth-century Byzantium traditionally associated with the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitos, reacting to Islam and as it were effectively refrigerating the classical heritage in what Yeats saluted as "death-in-life and life-in-death." [8]

The second climacteric centered on the refounding, in 1737 at the new Göttingen University, of the encyclopedic research library as an agency for helping to control the intellectual confusion—the "somewhat wide-angled, unfocused scholarship," as it has been charitably called—associated with the second great revolution in the Western world of books: the consequences of the invention and spread of printing by movable type. The confusion of late Renaissance polymathy, the effect of which in German-speaking lands was greatly aggravated by the final collapse of the medieval empire in the Thirty Years' War, had already provoked in Descartes's *Discours de la méthode* a highly effective restatement of the criticism of unstructured book-learning ("les sciences des livres") and the promotion of mathematics ("le bon sens") as the royal road of intellect, first made by Plato. What became known as the "Göttingen System" of research and research librarianship derived from the neo-Aristotelian and post-Cartesian remarriage of philosophy, scholarship, and political organization proposed by Leibniz and his fellow state counselors as a means of reforming public life, to begin with in Germany, then followed by Europe as a whole. The acquisition, cataloging, reviewing, and abstracting elements in the system were to form an infrastructure

for the new, salaried, and expert professoriat that was designed to be a leading element in the "rational-bureaucratic" state of the future, as one of its most distinguished products, Max Weber, was later to call it.[9]

Apart from the emergence of the modern research university in the nineteenth century (first in the Berlin of Hegel, Ranke, and Boeckh, then elsewhere in Europe, and toward the end of the century in North America), the climacteric effect of the Göttingen System is seen at its clearest in the massive conversion of the old royal, state libraries of the ancien régime into major enabling agencies for the increasingly professionalized world of learning and letters, the whole movement being involved directly or indirectly with the political, cultural, and economic expansion of the West that followed the French and Industrial Revolutions. First there is the influence of the Göttingen library on the reform of the British Museum under Panizzi. Then there is the influence of Panizzi's Museum on Mérimée and Delisle's Bibliothèque nationale and on Ainsworth Rand Spofford's Library of Congress. In turn, and most recently, there is the influence of the Library of Congress outside the Western world on, for example, the National Diet Library in Tokyo.[10]

IV

Reflection on this history suggests, I think, that it has at least three obvious constant and interlinked features. Considered together they indicate a destiny for libraries and scholarship that is not only shared but ecumenical.

The first feature is the all-embracing yet at the same time dependent nature of what I have called the world of books considered as instruments for the attainment of absolute knowledge. It is true that the tradition of radical criticism of the book exemplified by Plato and Descartes has been of categorical importance. (As I shall indicate, the tradition was continued by other equally prophetic figures such as Nietzsche and Mallarmé.) Yet even that tradition was in fact only made effective through the very thing that it criticized. In a well-known chapter Paul Friedländer shows how Plato by his dialogues aimed to transcend the conventional book by what we might call the metabook. Again, it was by its

revelation of the Latin-like authority and concision of the French language in seventy-odd pages of printed text that the *Discours de la méthode* became a major—if not the only—essential element in French high mentality, from the philosophes of the ancien régime to the intellectuels of the Republic. Moreover, the world of books can be shown to be a fundamental constituent even of abstract mathematical thinking and of the sciences based on it, when these are considered as the activities of actual mathematicians and scientists: Popper's analysis in his *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approàch* is a recent example. One has the feeling that to the student of high mentality the book seems as pervasive a medium as the sign does to the pure structuralist. Even so, the encyclopedic bibliographical control and historico-critical reading proposed by Aristotle or Leibniz did not and could not guarantee automatically the philosophical comprehension of the sublunary world required by the Platonic and Cartesian episteme. That can be attained only by the exercise of personal judgment and taste by the scholar (and by the collaborating librarian and reader) that present the results of his reading as a matter of his, and everybody else's, life and death: in Boeckh's words "what is planted by scholarship is enjoyed only by judgment and taste" (nur Urtheil and Geschmack geniesst was die Gelehrsamkeit pflanzt). Such existential exercise of the intellectual will depends on the morale of the community of scholars (and librarians and readers) as a secular going concern, and this in turn depends on the fortune attending its source of external support.[11]

The second feature, then, is the interdependence of the world of libraries and scholarship and the world of politics, administration, and patronage: "le gouvernement de l'intelligence," as Lavisse termed it in his study of the brilliant but eventually abortive regime of Louis XIV. In addition to their use in the formation of its bureaucracy, the interest of the state in libraries and scholarship lies in their indispensability for the establishment of the state's ultimate identity and legitimacy as the world becomes progressively more "disenchanted" (to use another of Weber's terms) and desacralized and the older liturgies less operative. The state is interested in their indispensability for what Louis and his chief cultural administrator Colbert called la gloire. Thus the suc-

cess of Leibniz's program is to be associated not only with the increasing wealth but also with the general élan of certain German electorates—Saxony, Hanover, and in particular Prussia—as they rise through the eighteenth-century European state system. Of the "glorious" works of scholarship that can be most conveniently associated with political élan one could cite the twenty-four-volume *Geschichte der Wissenschaften in Deutschland—Neuere Zeit* begun by the Royal Bavarian Academy under the initial direction of Ranke in 1859 (the year that *Tristan und Isolde* inaugurated "the music of the future" in the royal capital). So far as Britain is concerned the *Oxford English Dictionary* "on historical principles" and especially the *Dictionary of National Biography* illustrate my point. The DNB was published in 1901 with a concluding article on Queen Victoria by the editor Sidney Lee. It was based on the collaboration among over 650 contributors, a major publisher (George Smith), and the national research library (the British Museum); and one can say that together with the OED it laid out the substance of the nation's achievement and identity, providing the great and serene monument to a Victorian imperialism already passing its apogee.[12]

Empires seem of necessity eventually to decline. The third feature therefore is the link between the faltering of external support for libraries and scholarship and their internal loss of morale: a loss of morale shown particularly in the disintegration of what I have called the encyclopedic cohering of the known heritage and in the failure (or it may be disinclination) of the scholar to exercise the total judgment and taste necessary to achieve effective philosophical comprehension of the heritage as it is presented to him through his reading. Clearly the only fully worked-out case so far, at least in the West, is (to quote from the title of Henri-Irenée Marrou's essential study) "la fin de la culture antique." Here, with the growing but profitless complications of world empire, the hitherto acceptably foreshortened "perspective" of classical small-city culture on the sublunary world became progressively revealed as a contraction (rétrécissement) of perspective that proved lethal. There was the growing dilettantism and etiolation of its scholarship (curiositas), and at the same time the disconnection of that scholarship not only from service to the state but also from the duty of philosophical comprehension.

In turn, the latter reverted to a disembodied Platonism, culminating in the writings of Plotinus. Finally the whole destiny of classical culture became increasingly susceptible to, and conscious of, the exposure by Judaeo-Christian prophecy of the essential limitation of unaided secular intellect. This exposure originated in the provincial—indeed, desert—insights of, say, Psalm 131; moved toward the center of affairs in the first Epistle to the Corinthians; and found its definitive statement, so far as Western Europe was concerned, in the writings of St. Augustine, with his demonstration that there is the City of God immanent within the city of the world, and that it alone makes the secular city fully intelligible and therefore, if he so wills it, acceptable to the citizen.[13]

V

Though this may be the only fully developed case so far, phrases such as "the link between the faltering of external support for libraries and scholarship and their internal loss of morale" and "disintegration of the encyclopedic cohering of the known heritage" surely have a contemporary echo. (One thinks of the problems of zero-growth, of the Two Cultures, of the "relevance" of scholarship and its institutions to actual living, and so on, characteristic of the past decade or so.) Does a consideration of the current state of libraries and scholarship help validate our schematism?

The origin of our present discontent (if such it be) with book-based scholarship can be found a century ago with the beginning of the end of what has been called the "zenith of European power" in the 1870s and 1880s. In the first place the great depression of that period was accompanied by a break in expansionist public financing which in many ways did not resume until a "managed" Keynesian world economy was set up after 1945. This had some traumatic effects on the high-cost infrastructure of encyclopedic scholarship, especially the major research libraries. Thus the era of Panizzian reform in the British Museum Library came to an abrupt end in 1886 with a 40 percent cut in the printed book purchase grant—a constraint with palpable consequences for the library's effectiveness as the de facto national

bibliographical center that did not begin to be lifted until the 1950s.[14]

In the second place, the period witnessed the incipient inner fragmentation of the general system of scholarly, scientific, and literary disciplines. Since 1789 the system had found its external support no longer in the thaumaturgic kings and the worshiping churches of the postmedieval ancien régime, but in a serious reading public of autonomous citizenry dependent in part on large libraries (in London, the London Library as much as the British Museum Library) to complement its own private collections. But it had depended also on the assumption that the pace of inevitable specializing and professionalizing in the various disciplines (what the Germans were to call "Fachpositivismus") would not outstrip the capacity of the continuing self-education of both writers and readers to comprehend those disciplines, at least in principle, as a totality indispensable for right living and action. Outstrip in the last decades of the nineteenth century it most certainly did. G. M. Young in his *Victorian England* has written the great lament for the passing in the 1870s of the serious reading public that had interacted intimately and effectively with Macaulay and Mill, Faraday and Darwin, Newman and Ruskin, Tennyson and Dickens and George Eliot; and Max Weber in his *Wissenschaft als Beruf* has written the great lament for the professoriat that could no longer provide final enlightenment for the citizenry, in particular for the young. From the hindsight of C. P. Snow's Two Cultures, however, perhaps the chief crux was the increasingly hermetic mathematicization not only of the individual natural sciences—even Faraday, it is said, could not have understood his chief follower in the study of electromagnetism, Clerk-Maxwell—but of the entire logic of discovery and explanation, culminating in 1910 with the magisterial *Principia mathematica* of Whitehead and Russell and their laconic (for some, complacent) statement that "the very abstract simplicity of the ideas of this work defeats language." [15]

Thirdly, it is in this period that one notes a further and this time highly disturbing restatement of the Platonic and Cartesian alienation from the professional world of books on the part of a new intellectual élite conscious both of its modernity and of its absolute responsibility for the living—and lived—truth: a reopen-

ing of the fateful split between the érudit and the philosophe. There is Mallarmé's first exquisite call in his *Brise marine:*

> *La chair est triste, hélas! et j'ai lu tous les livres.*
> *Fuir! là-bas fuir! Je sens que des oiseaux sont ivres*
> *D'être parmi l'écume inconnue et les cieux!*

It led to a dedicated, lifelong, and highly influential striving after the metabook—and the metareader—which Mallarmé never in fact realized (though the extraordinary manuscript sketch was eventually published by Scherer in 1957 as *Le "Livre" de Mallarmé*). More impatient (indeed apocalyptic), Nietzsche, the most promising philological scholar of his time, voiced in his *Ecce Homo* a savage and final rejection of his own profession: bland, sub-Hegelianized, and no longer willing or able to exercise real taste and judgment on the results of its reading:

> *This fairness of German* taste, *which accords everything equal rights. . . .* Realities *were altogether lacking in my knowledge, and the "idealities" were worth damn all! . . . Sickness . . . alone put an end to all bookwormishness, in plain terms philology! I was redeemed from the "book," for years at a time I read nothing—the* greatest *favour I have done myself!—That deepest self, as it were buried and grown silent under a constant* compulsion to listen *to other selves (—and that is what reading means!) awoke slowly . . . but at length* it spoke again—

—in the ecstatic works culminating in the equally influential *Also sprach Zarathustra.*[16]

Nevertheless the situation, though bad, is not out of hand. Whitehead and Russell (one recalls) believed that even highly mathematicized sciences could be retained within the circle of common discourse through the classic agency of comprehension by "a properly instructed mind." Indeed, the overall mission now of libraries and scholarship may be seen as assisting in the creation of what Nietzsche, in his overdriven idiom, saw as "the perfect reader . . . a monster of courage and curiosity, also something supple, cunning, cautious, a born adventurer and discoverer": the reader, we might say, as a Ulysses voyaging through the hazardous sea of books. Only committed superreaders can provide

the constituency essential for securing financial support for libraries and scholarship from demotic political managements on a more enduring basis than that provided (for example) by ephemeral baby booms and cold-war competitions such as those which produced the ill-conceived expansion of the 1960s and the equally ill-conceived retrenchment now. In the second place, only the articulate demands of such a reading public can sustain the intellectual will and indeed sheer stamina necessary to forward the task of bibliographical containment, and encyclopedic assimilation into a common usable heritage, of a further magnification of our knowledge and experience during the present century that has been both sharp and unnerving.[17]

For with discoveries such as the physical basis of heredity in Crick and Watson's modeling of DNA, or the biological prerequisite of mind in Sherrington's integrative action of the nervous system, or the total structure of history in terms of Febvre and Braudel's geographical time, social time, and individual time, or the grounding of theology in history in Bultmann's demythologizing, we now have the oceanic feeling that we can grasp the knowable as well as the known entirely in a continuous sequence of explanation. But at the same time, with our experience, direct or vicarious, of the three holocausts of the century—the First World War, mass genocide, the nuclear end to the Pacific war—we also know, modo Augustiniano, that our actual living in history can exceed the capacity of our unaided intellect to understand it—can, as it were, anaesthetize the mind—unless humanistic scholarship rises (as it has not yet risen) to its supreme task of making sense even of such extreme situations as these. To help steel the will, libraries and scholarship need the world of categorically demanding general readers we seem temporarily to have lost.[18]

VI

Finally, then, and briefly: if the way ahead for libraries and scholarship lies through (as in the past it always has) the interaction between a constantly enlarging encyclopedic enterprise and a constantly enlarging critical reading public—if we are all autodidacts now—does our schematism suggest any local executive action for the future, as, to be truly valid, it should?

The mass media in the late fifties and sixties were no doubt guilty of idiotizing the people; but they did generate incidentally some of the integrating mechanisms needed. From the search for prestige among competing large-circulation reprint houses has emerged the "quality" original paperback series which directly and effectively presents to the general reader the results of advanced scholarship undiluted by any deliberate vulgarization, however high. (As an example I would take Pelican Books; and within the Pelican list I would take the *Pelican New Testament Commentaries* of 1963 onward.) Moreover if, following McLuhan, we look to the audiovisual media to assist the book (including, in 1979, even the large-circulation paperback) in its troubles with the citizenry, then we now have developments like the "open universities" of public-service radio and television with which publishers, and scholars, and librarians with their new "outreach" services are learning more and more to collaborate.[19]

However, the enterprise eventually succeeds or fails according to the degree to which the traditional, multivolume, bedrock encyclopedia continues in one form or another to communicate to the reader a sense of the total encompassing relevance of the known. Let me review, summarily, the three great innovative projects of our time. First, the *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science* (1938–), in many respects the brainchild of *Principia mathematica* in its attempt to realize Whitehead and Russell's object "to show that with the aid of symbolism, deductive reasoning can be extended to regions of thought not usually supposed amenable to mathematical treatment," has still not produced and (one feels) in principle never can produce its section dealing with the arts and humanities. Second, Lucien Febvre's élitist (although intensely committed) *Encyclopédie française* (1935–62), by self-consciously eschewing the alphabetical epitomizing approach of "vulgar dictionaries" such as Larousse in favor of sweeping and programmatic essays, simply declines to engage at all with the general reader. We come then to the fifteenth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* published in 1974. Salesmanship notwithstanding, this edition is a serious attempt to marry tradition and experiment, with its novel, deliberately mass-educational, and Aristotelianizing synoptic index—the *Propaedia*—encouraging the reader to know the known sys-

tematically in terms of essential perspectives including, though still but loosely connected, the history of libraries and scholarship. Despite further and no doubt radical changes in presentation, miniaturization, and so on necessitated by the various quantitive "explosions" in information, media, reading public, and cost, the way up the mountain is surely in this general direction.[20]

Nevertheless the fact remains that the history of libraries and the history of scholarship are still too loosely connected, and this not least because in the words of the distinguished writer of the *Britannica* article "Library," Sir Frank Francis, "the history of libraries has not in general attracted the scholarly attention it deserves."

And so ladies and gentlemen, members of the Library History Group, the future is still open and in part yours to make. I have tried to keep the presence—the admonishing presence—of Augustine offstage: however, I will leave you to meditate (and I trust to act) on the epigraph from the most recent attempt at a *De Civitate Dei,* "Work . . . while it is day."[21]

NOTES

1. Until the middle of the eighteenth century (approximately) the history of libraries and the history of scholarship had together formed the "literary history," historia literarum, proposed by Bacon in the Second Book of *The Advancement of Learning* (p. 68 of the edition by Arthur Johnston, Oxford, 1974). Daniel Georg Morhof's *Polyhistor,* 1688, fourth and last edition 1747, was a typical example. I have used Bacon's historia literarum as the point of departure for my paper "The Development of the British Museum Library to 1857 in Its European Context" (*Wolfenbütteler Forschungen,* Bd. 2, 1977) to which the present lecture is a sequel in many respects (including a number of common references). The earlier paper also contains some remarks on the Bibliothèque du Roi, Paris, and the Bodleian Library which are perhaps a little too conspicuous by their absence from what follows.
2. Phyllis Dain, *The New York Public Library: A History of Its Founding and Early Years* (New York: New York Public Library, 1972), p. xv. Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship,* 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968–75). E. J. Kenney, *The Classical Text: Aspects of Editing in the Age of the Printed Book,* Sather Classical Lectures, vol. 44 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974). Bernhard Fabian, "Göttingen als Forschungsbibliothek im 18. Jahrhundert," in *Wolfenbütteler Forschungen,* Bd. 2, 1977; "An Eighteenth-Century Research Collection: English Books at Göttingen University Library," in *The Library,* September 1979, pp. 209-24; and "English Books and Their Eighteenth-Century German Readers," in *The Widening Circle: Essays on the Circulation of Literature in Eighteenth-Century Europe,* ed. Paul J. Korshin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976). Georg Leyh, *Handbuch der Bibliothekswissenschaft,* Bd. 3 (Leipzig: O. Harrassowitz, 1931–40), Zur Einführung, p. xiii: "die Bibliotheken sollten in ihrer Bedeutung verbunden mit der Geschichte von Wissenschaft und Bildung im allgemeinen Kulturzusammenhang erschienen."
3. Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *L'Apparition du livre,* L'Evolution de l'humanité, no. 49 (Paris: Editions A. Michel, 1958). Henri-Jean Martin, *Livre, pouvoirs et société à Paris au XVIIe siècle, 1598–1701,* Histoire et civilisation du livre, no. 3, 2 vols. (Geneva: Droz, 1969). Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe,* 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).
4. Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning.* For the Flexner Report see Carleton B. Chapman in *Daedalus,* Winter 1974.
5. Barbara Smith McCrimmon, "The Publication of the British Museum's General Catalogue of Printed Books, 1881–1900"

(Ph.D. diss., The Florida State University, 1973). Philip John Weimerskirch, "Antonio Panizzi's Acquisitions Policies for the Library of the British Museum" (D.L.S. diss., Columbia University School of Library Service, 1977). *IFLA's First Fifty Years,* ed. W. R. H. Koops and J. Wieder (Munich: Verlag Dokumentation, 1977), p. 32, with references there to the text of the exchange between Leyh and Bourgeois.

6. I have based this paragraph largely on Werner Jaeger's *Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of His Development,* 2d English ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1962) (first German edition, Berlin, 1923), especially chapter 13, "The Organisation of Research"; and on E. G. Turner's inaugural lecture, *Athenian Books in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.* (London: Published for University College by H. K. Lewis, 1952). Pfeiffer's qualifying remarks on Jaeger in Part One of his first volume should be read. Freud on authorship forms the peroration to the twenty-third of the *Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse* (Vienna: H. Heller, 1916–17).

7. P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972). August Boeckh, *Encyklopädie und Methodologie der philologischen Wissenschaften,* 2d ed. (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1886), p. 11.

8. See *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale,* vol. 9, no. 3, (1966), a special number devoted to the encyclopedia, in particular: Pierre Grimal, "Encyclopédies antiques"; Paul Lemerle, "L'Encyclopédisme à Byzance à l'apogée de l'Empire"; and Charles Pellat, "Les Encyclopédies dans le monde arabe." Lemerle, in *Le Premier Humanisme byzantin* (Paris, 1971), gives the earlier history of Byzantine scholarship. Yeats's line is from his poem "Byzantium."

9. "Somewhat wide-angled, unfocused scholarship" is quoted by Eisenstein (*The Printing Press,* vol. 1, p. 76) from E. H. Harbison, *The Christian Scholar in the Age of Reformation* (New York: Scribner, 1956), p. 54. For the relation of Leibniz to Descartes, see Yvon Belaval, *Leibniz critique de Descartes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960). For Leibniz as organizer of research, see Wilhelm Totok, "Leibniz als Wissenschaftsorganisator," in *Leibniz: Sein Leben—Sein Wirken—Seine Welt,* ed. Totok and Carl Haase (Hanover, 1966). For Göttingen see the papers by Fabian listed in note 2 above. The question of the direct influence of Leibniz on Göttingen has been the subject of much myth-making, not least by the university itself, and requires a good deal of further detailed work (see Fabian's Wolfenbüttel paper, note 2 above). Weber's *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft,* first published posthumously at Tübingen in 1922, has at last been issued in a complete translation as *Economy and Society,* 3 vols. (New York: Bedminster Press,

1968), corrected reissue, 2 vols. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978).

10. For a note on Panizzi, Mérimée, and Delisle, see Julien Cain's preface to Eugène-Gabriel Ledos, *Histoire des catalogues des livres imprimés de la Bibliothèque nationale* (Paris: Editions des Bibliothèques nationales, 1936). For the Library of Congress, see John Y. Cole's article on Spofford in *Librarians of Congress, 1802–1974* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1977).

11. Paul Friedländer, *Plato,* vol. 1, ch. 5 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), "The Written Work." Translated from the second German edition (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1954). Karl R. Popper, *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972). See the references under "World 3" in the Index of Subjects. Boeckh, *Encyklopädie und Methodologie,* p. 309.

12. Ernest Lavisse, *Histoire de France depuis les origines jusqu'à la révolution,* vol. 7 (Paris: Hachette et cie., 1906), book 7. For the "political" rationale of the *Geschichte der Wissenschaften in Deutschland* see Ranke's Entwurf in the *Nachrichten von der Historischen Commission bei der K. Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften,* Erstes Stück (1859). For the comparable political involvement of Wagner, see the hostile remarks in Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo* (note 16 below). For the statistics, working methods, etc., relating to the DNB, see the various prefaces by Lee and Sir Charles Firth (now conveniently brought together at the end of the Compact Edition, 2 vols., London, 1975).

13. Henri-Irenée Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique,* 2 parts (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1937–49). Charles Morris Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture: A Study of Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), revised and corrected (London: Oxford University Press, 1944). Peter R. L. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (London: Faber, 1967).

14. I have summarized the traditional account of the reduction in 1886 of the British Museum's purchase grant in "The Development of the United States Collection, Department of Printed Books, British Museum," in the *Journal of American Studies,* vol. 1, no. 1 (1967), p. 84.

15. For an outline of the interdependence of serious reading public and institutional library in later eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century Britain, see Thomas Kelly, *Early Public Libraries* (London, 1966), especially the sections in chapters 6 and 8 on "gentlemen's" and "middle-class" subscription libraries, including the London Library. For an example of the triangular use of

private library-London Library-British Museum Library by a leading mid-Victorian author see the passage on the composition of *Romola* in Gordon S. Haight, *George Eliot* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 350. George Malcolm Young, *Victorian England: Portrait of an Age* (London, 1936; 1953, with new introduction), annotated ed. by G. Kitson Clark (London: Oxford University Press, 1977). Max Weber, *Wissenschaft als Beruf* (Munich, 1919). For Faraday and Clerk-Maxwell, see L. Pearce Williams's article in the *Dictionary of Scientific Biography,* ed. C. C. Gillespie (New York: Scribner, 1970–), vol. 4, p. 539. Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell, *Principia mathematica* (Cambridge: University Press, 1910–13), vol. 1, p. 2.

16. Mallarmé's *Brise marine* appeared in 1866 in the first number of *Le Parnasse contemporain.* Anthony Hartley's plain prose translation runs: "The flesh is sad, alas! and I have read all the books. To escape! To escape far away! I feel that birds are drunk to be among unknown foam and the skies!" *Mallarmé,* The Penguin Poets (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin, 1965), p. 29. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo,* trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin Classics, 1979), pp. 120, 91-93.

17. Whitehead and Russell, *Principia mathematica,* p. 3. Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo,* p. 73.

18. For a conspectus of modern discovery informed by the possibility of a continuing sequence of explanation see the 15th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and in particular its *Propaedia,* discussed in section VI.

19. Marshall McLuhan, "Classroom without Walls," in *Explorations in Communication,* ed. Edmund Carpenter and McLuhan (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960).

20. Whitehead and Russell, *Principia mathematica,* p. 3. Jacques Robichez, "L'Encyclopédie française," in *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale,* vol. 9, no. 3 (1966). For the thinking behind the *Propaedia,* see Otto A. Bird, *Cultures in Conflict: An Essay in the Philosophy of the Humanities* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976). Bird was a member of the planning committee responsible for preparing the 15th edition of the *Britannica.* In saying that the history of libraries and the history of scholarship are "still but loosely connected" in the *Propaedia* I am thinking of the fact that the history of libraries is not reviewed formally in relation to the history of scholarship in the appropriate part of the *Propaedia* (part 10, division IV); indeed, unlike the history of scholarship, it is not reviewed formally at all in part 10 (though many references to its treatment in the body of the encyclopedia—the article by Francis mentioned in my penultimate paragraph—are of course given).

21. Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, 6 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1934–39), vol. 1. I am greatly indebted to Mr. Stephen Green of the British Library for his detailed criticism of my original text. I am also grateful to Dr. Lotte Hellinga and Mr. Peter Meade of the Library, to Dr. Anthony Grafton of Princeton, and to Mr. P. N. Furbank of the Open University, Milton Keynes, for their comments on the revision.

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